



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

English Language Teaching: Objectives, Problems And Solutions In An Indian Perspective

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Abstract

English is the means of communication. It is the lingua franca of the world. It has been accepted and adopted as an official language by almost all the countries of the world today. India is no exception to it. In India, English is accepted as the second language. The aim of this paper is an attempt to discuss the relevance of English language teaching in India in the present scenario. It focuses on aspects of English language teaching in India. The importance of teaching English language in India to fulfil the ever-growing demands of language; its objectives and problems before the teachers are highlighted and solutions are offered to tackle such situation for better teaching-learning process.

Keywords: English language, teaching, lingua franca, objectives, problems-solutions.

I. Introduction:

It is a well-known fact that English is the most widely used language and the chief vehicle of International communication. It is the lingua franca of the world. It has been accepted and adopted as an official language by almost all the countries of the world today. India is no exception to it. It has occupied an important place in our educational system and life of our country. In India English is being perceived as a "must-know" language. It is the language that continues to dominate the nation. English is used all over the world not out of any imposition or force but because of the realization that it has certain advantages.

II. Importance of English Language:

The Importance of English Language has spread widely in the present scientific and technological world. As it has turned into a universal language, its presence and value in the world has been expanded enormously in the past few decades. Many money making activities add to the importance and relevance of English in every walk of life. David Crystal says about the importance of English language as "It is the language on which the sun never sets".

English is accepted as the second language in India and it is an indication that English has occupied an important place in Indian education and values.

The Following points are about the importance of teaching English in India.

- English has now become the lingua franca of the world.
- It is used as a powerful language of communication for the global village.
- It is one of the major languages of the world today.
- It is given access to the treasure of knowledge.
- It serves as a gate way to a wide range of employment opportunities anywhere in the world.
- It has given us an opportunity to study English literature, which is so vast.
- It is the language of science and technology, trade and commerce.
- It provides a strong finding force to keep all Indians unified.
- It is the only language of preventing isolation from the world.
- It has influenced many people, developed and refined them in many ways.
- It has made many Indians as great leaders, famous engineers, doctors, scientists, renowned philosophers, and well-known authors of the world.
- It is the status symbol of the Indian society and a "window to the world".
- It is the language of news, business, information, opportunity, employment, power and prestige in India.
- It is a library language of international importance.
- It occupies an important place in academic curriculum.
- It is the most influential language of the world. As such, it has always been a source of development in all the spheres of human activities.

III. Objectives of English Language Teaching:

English is a second language in India, and it should be taught as a language. The aim of teaching English in India is to help students to acquire a practical knowledge. Thompson and Wyatt rightly remarked that "It is necessary that Indian pupil should not only understand English when it is spoken or written, but also he should himself be able to speak and write it." The students should be able to understand, speak, English, read and write English. The teacher should emphasise more on the aims of teaching English. The objectives will help to teach effectively. These primary aims of teaching English are:

- a) to enable the students to understand spoken English.
- b) to enable the students to speak English.
- c) to enable the students to read English.
- d) to enable the students to write English.

IV. Problems of Teaching English in India:

There are many problems of teaching English in India. These problems will create unhealthy conditions for adequate teaching of English in India.

Lack of clear-cut aims: The teacher of English in India is not clear about the aims of teaching English. He is like an ancient mariner who does not know his destination and the student is like a forsaken vessel being drifted aimlessly. Many times, neither the teacher nor the student is acquainted with the aims of learning English. The teachers teach the subject to complete the syllabus. The students want to pass the examination. They do not study English as a subject to be 'learned' but as a subject to be 'passed'. The main aim in this way, get neglected. There is chaos everywhere in as for as the teaching of English language is concern.

Lack of Competent and Effective Teachers: Most of the Indian schools and colleges are in need of competent teachers of English language. Prof V.K. Gokak has rightly said, "The fundamental years for the teaching of English in schools are in the hands of teachers who neither know enough English nor are familiar with the latest and for teaching development in the pedagogy of English. Lack of adequate training in English, lack of initiative, innovative and motivation in teachers are the main reasons of the lack of effective and competent teachers.

Old and Faulty Methods of Teaching English: Teaching of English in India suffers from old and faulty methods of teaching. The teachers are still using old and faulty Translation- cum-Grammar method of teaching. The new approaches-Structural and Situational are not popular with the teachers. As a consequence, the students are facing all the demerits of the old methods and are devoid of new effective methods and approaches. They are compelled to cram the language and real learning is not possible.

Inadequate Use of Modern Teaching aids: Many of the educational institutions do not possess the modern teaching aids. There is very much less use of audio-visual aids in the class room. Computer systems, ultra-CD's, LCD Projectors, are not used by the students.

English language cannot be taught without using audio-visual aids and they are neglected in Indian educational institutions.

Overcrowded Classes: Overcrowded classrooms is a serious problem for teachers. The of large number of learners is the most important practical problem related to the presence teaching of English in India. The teachers of English language experience a lot of problems in handling such a big class. It is very difficult to pay due attention to individual students. The ratio of students in relation to teachers is not proportional. This is the reason why individual attention is not possible to the students. Due to overcrowded classes the teachers is not able to tackle individual problems.

Low standard of text books: The text books English prescribed for the students are not up to the standard. They are needed to be high standard. Pointing to this problem Prof V.K. Gokak has said, "Books are prescribed which bear no relevance to the needs of pupils at the stage."

Mother Tongue Interference: The use of mother tongue in teaching English proves of immense help. Most of the problems arise due to the interference of mother tongue. Both teachers and the students are very fluent in talking in their own mother tongue. When they speak in their mother tongue, they sometimes use English words of the sentences. They forget that every language differs in accent, stress, rhythm, and intonation. A majority of the students use mother tongue in the class room, bilingual method is adopted in the language classes. This method helps only slow learning to some extent. Moreover, this mother-tongue interference reduces the real learning process as a whole.

Neglect of Correction work: The teachers usually postpone the correction work or do it carelessly. The students are not trained to full benefit out of the correction. In this way, the correction work done by the teachers goes wasted.

Lack of Interest and Motivation: Most of the students in the class room are lack of interest and motivation. They do not find any immediate need for English their interest naturally slackness. The poverty, and social back ground also force them to neglect the language. Moreover lack of exposure and regular practice are in dire scarcity to achieve fluency in the use of the language.

Faulty Examination System: The syllabus in India is created wholly from the examination point of view. It is confined to the exam paper even through the students are studying English they are not able to produce without any grammatical error in English the most important reason is they study subject from the examination system make sure the students cramming robots rather than testing their analytical and creative skills. The teachers also find it very difficult to motivate students in the class because the students always aim at memorizing the notes. Prof R.L. Mehta observes, "His sole aim is to get the pupils through the examination by fair means or foul, the result is the graduate who cannot write a correct sentence of English".

Lack of Practice: In Indian class rooms, lecturers speak and the learners listen passively. The learners are not encouraged to ask questions. Even at the PG level, students are not encouraged to go for projects, workshops, seminars and conferences. Despite English being taught in school and college level for several years, students are not able to write the acceptable English of their own.

V. Solutions: According to Gautama Buddha, for every problem there is a solution. If so, for the problems of English language teaching, the following are some of the solutions.

1. The teacher must be clear in his mind about the aims of teaching English. The student must also know what is his purpose and what he is learning.
2. Government must appoint the competent and effective teachers. Language teaching institutes must provide short term or in service courses in teaching methods to the teaching of English.
3. Teachers should adopt new methods of teaching English. More stress should be laid on pattern practise of correct speaking and writing English than on Grammar Translation method of teaching English.
4. Provision must be made to equip every educational institution with necessary audio- visual aids for good and efficient teaching of English. They create interest among students and make them active as well as enthusiastic. Make sure that the number of students of a class room is limited.
5. The books of curriculum should be written in such a way that they fulfil the needs of the students and are written according to the mental standards of the students. The standard of text books can be improved, if they are written by faculty teaching in schools and colleges.
6. The system of examinations should be over hauled so that there is no need of cramming on the part of the students.
7. It is very important that the teacher must encourage the students to use English as far as possible. At the same time, there is no harm to use mother tongue judiciously.
8. The teacher should do the correction work regularly. The student should also be taught how to get maximum benefit out of the correction work done by the teacher.
9. The teachers should find way of helping students to enjoy their language activities and of building confidence. The enthusiasm the zeal and interest of the teacher can kindle, the spark of learning in the students.

The problems discussed cited above are common in all states of India. Thus, there is much to be done to remove the difficulties of teaching English to improve the standards of teaching English.

VI. Conclusion

As English has been very important and the source of development in all the spheres of human activities, the teachers should emphasize more on the aims and objectives. Keeping the problems and challenges in the mind, he should try to deliver the goods. English language teaching in India is really a fun if it is done in the right sporting way. Teachers thus have to motivate their students so that they will learn better.

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